



College of Graduate
Studies and Research

Annual Report from the Dean

Benjamin D. Caldwell

March 2020 - March 2021

This report outlines the various activities undertaken as Dean for the College of Graduate Studies and Research since submission of my last Annual Report in March 2020. The College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) encompasses three primary areas, the Graduate College, the Research Compliance Office (RCO), and the Office of Sponsored Programs and Grants Management (SPGM).

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on overall CGSR Operations

The pandemic has had a number of impacts of CGSR operations and activities. When the campus closing was announced in early March there were significant concerns by animal researchers about the status of the animal vivariums in the Center or the Sciences and CHUBS buildings. It was unknown if the vivariums would need to shut down completely which could have led to not just stoppage of animal research but also potential euthanasia of most if not all of the animals housed in the facilities. I worked to help coordinate with concerned faculty, vivarium facility staff, campus emergency services staff (Police, Facilities and Emergency Services) to develop a plan enabling the vivariums to remain open for care and maintenance of the animals.

Other areas of CGSR operations were impacted by COVID. In particular recruitment efforts, like most other areas of higher education were limited to virtual events, making recruitment more challenging than the in person recruiting we typically prefer. In addition to attending virtual recruitment events Phil Hardy, Director of Graduate Recruitment, worked with graduate program coordinators to arrange virtual open houses. Even with these challenges Fall enrollment was relatively flat (see Admission and Recruitment below), but significantly less than undergraduate enrollment.

CGSR personnel worked remotely from March until July, at which point some CGSR staff began to return to campus intermittently. Nearly all CGSR staff were working primarily on campus by August 1, although some continued to work partly remotely due to child care or health related reasons.

Student engagement and activities, were nearly non-existent. Graduate Teaching Assistants were offered the opportunity to participate in Mindful Meditation sessions with Dr. Alan Forrest, as a way of providing some emotional support.

Sponsored Programs and Grants Management

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Grants Management (SPGM) is overseen by CGSR; however, day-to-day operations is managed by SPGM Director, Tom Cruise. SPGM manages grant proposal application processing for both internal and external grants, provides grant management services for funded grant awards, and offers training and support for faculty and staff with interests in pursuing grant funding.

The previous 2019-2020 academic year represented one of the most productive years for Radford University grant applications, with more than \$11 million in external funding to Radford. The current year is down significantly in funding. This may be due a number of factors, particularly the pandemic. Applications are down; however, the year is not yet complete. Awards are down by more than 50% compared to last year. These may be due in part to the pandemic causing faculty focus on teaching efforts and less of research. Faculty have not been able to travel, which has impacted some filed research. Decreases in awards may also be due to a variety factors such as agency funding practices, changes to grant program timing issues (delays) impacted by the pandemic.

Year	Applications	Funded	\$ Awards
2020-21	47	36	4,050,933*
2019-20	55	53	11,411,816
2018-19	68	37	10,010,806
2017-18	74	52	5,847,197

*Grant awards as of 3/1/2021 for the 2020-21 fiscal year

SPGM Collaboration with Hanover Research

SPGM has been working with **Hanover Research**, a higher education consulting firm with expertise in grant preparation. Tom Cruise and I conference call with Hanover consultants regularly (once a month) to discuss funding opportunities and programs, grant review consultations, and grant writing workshop preparation. With Hanover's assistance, SPGM sponsored a Grant Proposal Writing Workshop (virtually via Zoom) in September 2020 with 31 faculty from RU and RUC enrolling in the workshop. Hanover also provided consulting services reviewing selected grants, particularly those with large funding requests (i.e. Impact Lab) or very competitive programs (i.e. NIH).

Tom Cruise also presented a two-day grant writing workshop at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, VA, with 15 attendees from the local area.

Scholarly Activities Committee

In conjunction with SPGM, I act as the chair of the **Scholarly Activities Committee**. Its activities include:

- SEED Grant proposal review - Proposals are reviewed monthly September through April. As of this submission twelve proposals have been reviewed for this academic year, and thus far, eleven proposals have been funded.

- Faculty Development Professional Leave application review – Eighteen (18) FDPL applications were submitted and reviewed by SAC. Applications were ranked and forwarded to the Provost for consideration of support for 2021-22 academic year.

Research Compliance Office

Summary of RCO Operations and Engagement

- Supervised RCO and new Research Compliance Manager
- Met with Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) leadership, and attended IRB and IACUC meetings when schedule allowed
- Supervised continued development of IRB Manager software for submission of IACUC research protocols (still in development)
- The Research Compliance Office moved from Buchanan House to Whitt Hall along with the College of Graduate Studies and Research.
- Acted as Institutional Official for oversight of human subjects and animal research regulations.

The **Research Compliance Office (RCO)** has been in a period of transition and in need of greater attention from CGSR. The previous Research Compliance Manager (RCM) resigned in March 2019, and three temporary personnel oversaw the compliance office through December of 2019 when Ms. Anna Marie Lee was selected as the new RCM. I have worked with Ms. Lee over the past year to onboard her to Radford University and its research oversight boards (IRB and IACUC).

IRB Manager was installed in the summer of 2019 as the new electronic submission system for human subject related research protocols. During this past year the RCO has been working with IRB Manager technical services to develop a similar **electronic submission process for animal care and use protocols** for review by IACUC. Plans are also being developed to revise the IRB submission forms to update and streamline the current processes.

IRB Protocol Submissions				IACUC Protocol Submissions		
	New Submissions	Amendments			New Submissions	Amendments
2021	28	28		2021	1	0
2020	125	22		2020	9	6
2019	75	15		2019	5	0

Institutional Official

In January 2020 I was officially appointed by President Hemphill as the **Institutional Official (IO)** for Radford University and assumed responsibilities for making sure Radford meets Federal regulations for IRB and IACUC functions. As IO, I appointed or reappointed members to IRB and IACUC bodies. I consulted with both IRB and IACUC on issues needing institutional support or oversight. I have worked

with IRB leadership and the Research Compliance Office to approve external requests for Institutional Authorization Agreements when researchers outside of Radford University wish to conduct projects at Radford locations or when Radford students or faculty request to conduct research externally. As mentioned above, when the pandemic first closed campus operations (in general), I worked with faculty conducting animal research and campus operations personnel to allow animals in university vivariums to be maintained and cared for during the shutdown without having to eliminate animals unnecessarily. During the fall, I also worked with IACUC leadership and the Provost to negotiate reassigned time for the IACUC chair as compensation for the significant time needed to oversee the regulatory duties overseen by the faculty member in this important role for the university.

The Graduate College

The Graduate College has the largest staff (8) of all CGSR units and comprises the greatest number of functions and duties to oversee and manage.

- Graduate Recruitment and Admissions
- Graduate Assistantships and Financial Assistance
- Academic Policies and Procedures
- Budget and Resource Management
- Graduate Student Services and Support

Staff Management

During the Fall I conduct regular annual review of all CGSR and RCO staff and the SPGM Director.

Dr. Amy Rubens, was appointed **Interim Associate Dean** in February 2020. I have spent significant time with Dr. Rubens during the past year on-boarding and mentoring her in regard to CGSR operations, and assigning her specific tasks. Many of Dr. Rubens assigned tasks were student-oriented.

- Participation on a GAC team for development of a new Student Needs Assessment survey. The survey team began work in March 2020 and the final survey was implemented in October November. Results of will be used to identify academic and student services students indicated are needed or need greater emphasis.
- Development of online new student and new GA/GTA orientation. A general orientation for new graduate students was not available previously. Orientation materials were provided via D2L for all new graduate students. Similar orientations were developed for new graduate assistants and graduate teaching assistants.
- Leadership of GAC Policies and Procedure committee
- Approval of student petitions and directed study requests
- Oversight of 3 Minute Thesis competition
- Assistance with CGSR web site

I have been very pleased with Dr. Rubens' efforts and performance in this role.

Academics

Academic changes are managed and approved through the Graduate Affairs Council (GAC). The council is chaired by the Graduate Dean. Curricular changes are submitted from departments or schools and approved by their home colleges and forwarded to GAC for final approval. Graduate college staff review the proposals to make sure they meet Graduate College and University policies. If there are issues or concerns Graduate College staff work with proposal authors to correct issues before proposals are forwarded to GAC for approval. Below is a summary of **academic proposals considered and approved by GAC** during the 2020-2021 academic year (at the time of this report's submission)

New programs or Concentrations

- Master of Science in Athletic Training – final SCHEV approval granted in 2020
- New concentration in Clinical Research Administration for Master of Science in Health Sciences

Program Deletions

- Post-Graduate Certificate in Gerontology
- Music Pedagogy Certificate

Course and Program Changes

- New Courses Approved – 19 courses
- Course Revisions – 35 courses
- Course Deletions – 4 courses
- Program Revisions – 5 programs

Admission and Recruitment

Graduate enrollment in fall 2020 increased by 1.0% across RU and RUC campuses. RUC graduate programs increased by 50 students (1.15%) where Radford main campus programs declined 3.7%. The 1.0% increase in enrollment fell short of the Graduate College Strategic Plan goal of increasing annual enrollments by 3% each year. However, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, a modest increase seems acceptable. Even with the pandemic, applications did increase from 1616 for Fall 2019 to 1721 for fall 2020.

Fall Enrollment Comparisons				
Location	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	% Change
RU	957	989	952	-3.7 %
RUC	N/A	334	384	+1.15 %
Total	957	1323	1336	+1.00 %

Recruitment efforts during fall 2020 and spring 2021 have been significantly impacted. Phil Hardy, Director of Graduate Recruitment, normally spends a significant amount of time attending recruitment events; however, there have been no face to face recruiting fairs or events scheduled this year. Nearly all recruitment events have been virtual. Phil has “attended” virtual recruitment events, and reports that results vary depending on the virtual platforms being used at any particular event. He has worked diligently with graduate program coordinators in hosting virtual open houses and

information sessions. At the time of this submission applications are down (-87); however, admissions are up (+46).

New Affiliation Agreements

To assist with recruitment efforts the I have worked over the past year on creating affiliation agreements with **Hollins University** in an effort to create pipelines for Hollins students into Radford graduate programs. These affiliation agreements will reserve up to 3 seats per class for qualified Hollins University graduates in the programs listed below.

- Counseling and Human Development, MS – completed Dec 2020
- Master of Social Work – in development/near completion
- Master of Occupational Therapy – in development/near completion

I worked with the Procurement and Contracts Office to pilot a new partnership approval process in which all approval signatures are obtained electronically. The Counselor Education affiliation agreement was used as a pilot run for the new approval process, and demonstrated that the process was efficient and relatively simple to execute. This new process should cut down on the possibility of losing paperwork and save considerable time.

Radford signed affiliation agreements with **Emory and Henry College** in July 2019 that would allow EHC students to begin taking graduate course work as accelerated students during the senior. These agreements are with master's programs in Business Administration, English and Strategic Communications; however, to date no students from Emory and Henry have taken advantage of the agreement. These agreements expire in August 2021. This spring the Strategic Communication program began discussions to encourage EHC students, and together we are reviewing the agreement for potential revisions to the agreement.

The Graduate College is also working with the newly approved master's program in Athletic Training (approved by SCHEV during the fall) to develop potential affiliation agreements with area colleges as possible feeder schools for the Athletic Training program.

Graduate Student Support and Services

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistants provide a variety of service roles for the university, from graduate teaching fellows (GTFs) and teach assistants (GTAs), to service roles as non-teaching graduate assistants (GAs) both internally within graduate programs and externally to academic and nonacademic units across campuses. Ms. Michele Ralston in the Graduate College coordinates requests and final assignments for GAs and manages disbursement of funds for tuition and stipends. Assistantships make up nearly 60% of the entire CGSR budget.

Training GTFs, GTA's and GAs so they know what to expect in their assignments is essential to their success not only as a GA, but as a graduate student. Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Amy Rubens, prepared an **online orientation program in D2L for all classifications of Graduate Assistants**. Under normal non-pandemic conditions graduate assistants have attended an in-person, new GA orientation

program prior to the start of classes. Due to the number of non-teaching GAs (~145) this in-person orientation was not possible, and the online option was deemed best. An added benefit to the online orientation is that all types of GAs, including GTAs and GTF's, share the same basic orientation. All GAs were able to access the D2L training modules prior to the start of classes and were required to complete Title IX training before starting the assigned duties.

New GTAs and GTF's require additional training specifically related to working in a classroom environment. This was a much smaller group (~35), and Dr. Rubens and I oversaw the **socially distanced, in-person orientation prior to the state of classes**. This orientation provided instruction on expectations, responsibilities, restrictions, additional Title IX training, ethics, how to respond to emergency situations, cheating and plagiarism, and situation/classroom management. GTAs and GTFs receive additional discipline specific training within the academic programs they are working.

GTF/GTA training was raised as an area of possible concern during the SACSCOC site visit in November 2019. As a result, the **Graduate College is reviewing how GTFs and GTAs are educated and monitored in their teaching related duties**. This process was initiated in the spring of 2020; however, with the onset of the pandemic and the focus of changing classes to online delivery this initiative was put on hold. We are now re-engaged with this effort, and are in the process of collecting training and assessment materials from each academic unit that utilizes GTFs and GTAs as to how graduate students are trained and supervised. We intend to establish a basic, standardized graduate assistant education, training and supervision program for all teaching related GAs at Radford. Discipline and course specific training would continue to reside within graduate programs and academic departments.

Graduate Student Needs Survey

It has become evident through informal conversations and anecdotes that graduate students are not significantly engaged at Radford beyond their academic programs. Generally support services are focused on undergraduates, and many graduate students do not know what support services are available to them. Anecdotally there are reports that some service areas do not know how to handle graduate students. Last spring I asked for volunteers from the Graduate Affairs Council to form a **Graduate Student Needs Working Group**. This group (Dr. Amanda Kellogg, Dr. Yao Shuo, Dr. Amy Rubens, and myself) began developing a Graduate Student Needs Assessment to identify the academic and personal support needs and wants of graduate students at Radford, RUC, RHEC and SWVAHEC sites and online students. The Working Group met regularly biweekly through the spring, summer and fall semesters, using a sample survey provided by the Council of Graduate Schools, that was modified significantly to suit Radford University. The survey was developed in Qualtrics and test piloted with a small group of graduate students who participated in follow-up focus groups. An IRB proposal was submitted and approved, and the final survey was sent out to students.

Below are few items from the survey related to the impact of the pandemic on students, and their overall satisfaction with their program.

- 25% (329) of enrolled graduate students responded to the survey.
- 88% indicated they will graduate on time; 12% are delayed
 - Of those who are delayed, nearly 45% indicated COVID has impacted their schedule.
- 62% indicated COVID has impacted their academic performance

- 20% indicated concerns about maintaining mental health during the pandemic
- **86% indicated their overall experience in the graduate program has met or exceeded expectations**
- 81% would recommend their graduate program to others

The survey data is still being examined for interest and need for student services and other items related to student life at Radford.

Efforts in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity takes many forms and is not limited just to ethnic or racial background. Student and faculty perspectives and experiences vary based on a wide variety of factors, and the Graduate College supports all students and faculty no matter what their ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, socioeconomic or educational backgrounds may be. This can also include the locations where of students and faculty resides are enrolled (Radford main campus, RUC of Higher Education Centers in Roanoke or Abingdon). There is also variation due to whether a students or faculty are working in face-to face or on-line environments.

Below is a summary of efforts made by the Graduate College or the Graduate Dean in areas related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on behalf of both students and faculty.

- The Graduate College created a **student advisory board** to provide input to the Graduate College. Members of the committee have differing elements of diversity including varying race, ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientation, and both online and on-campus students. Their input on graduate college programming
- **Vinicius Rios**, an international student in the Strategic Communication master's program was nominated as a Diverse Rising Graduate Scholar sponsored by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine. He was one of 10 national award winners.
- Deans are reading and discussing the book ***From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*** by McNair, et al. as part of the Radford's *Engaging Difference* program. The Deans are also participating in an *Introduction to Systemic Racism* workshop sponsored by *Crossroads Antiracism*.
- The Graduate Dean and Interim Graduate Dean attended a seminar/webinar and discussion group titled "**Understanding and Reducing Implicit Bias in Higher Education**", sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools.
- A **new graduate student orientation program** was developed and implemented in D2L for all students no matter which the campus they were studying (RU, RUC or Higher Education Centers) or the mode of program delivery (online vs. face-to-face). The orientation included several elements for graduate students in general
 - Video on transitioning to graduate studies and the impact on **work-life-studies balance, imposter syndrome and mental health**
 - Highlighted general information about **counseling center/substance abuse support, Military Resource Center, Title IX Office**
 - Highlight of activities the **Center for Diversity and Inclusion** office sponsors that would welcome Graduate students

- Special content specifically designed to **help students transition to graduate studies**, keeping in mind that many RUC graduate students have been "out of the classroom" and in the professional world for at least a few years.
- Many D2L modules included videos and **transcripts for all video content**.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant orientation modules in D2L targeted training and facilitated on-going, in-demand access to the **cultural competency resources** maintained by Dr. Sharon Jones (Cultural Competency Project Manager).
- During the spring of 2019, the Graduate Affairs Council approved a change to student thesis and dissertation committee structure rules that allow inclusion of committee members from departments outside of a graduate program's home department. The rules change also allows a committee member external to Radford University from another institution or industry. This will help provide more an **expanded pool of potential committee members and allow for more diverse expertise and points of view on capstone committees**.
- Social Media posts from the Graduate College **included "captions" for content displayed as an image to allow viewers who use screen readers**.

Budget Management

CGSR manages a budget of nearly approximately \$3.1 million for all CGSR operating units (including SPGM and RCO). The Graduate College provides more than \$1.9 million in funding for graduate assistantships (GAs), graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) and graduate teaching fellowships (GTFs) in the forms of stipends and tuition support (GTAs and GTFs only). The Graduate College also provides Graduate student Professional Development Awards to support student attendance at conferences and meetings to present their scholarly efforts and professional development activities.

During the spring of 2020, each of the academic colleges were asked to develop funding reduction strategies. These strategies resulted in a **reduction to the CGSR FY21 budget of nearly \$107,000**, with most cuts to operating and salary lines. Funding cuts to students support (i.e. assistantships and student travel) were minimal at \$15,600. Thus, we were able to minimize the impact on students support.

Relocation of Graduate College

The Graduate College had been located in Buchanan House for a number of years, but Graduate College staff have had concerns about health issues possibly related to the building. With space opening up in Whitt Hall, the Graduate College was offered the opportunity to relocate to Whitt Hall during late July. With only 3 weeks' notice, **the Graduate College and Research Compliance offices staff prepped, packed and moved to Whitt Hall**, all just preceding the pandemic-related early start of classes in August. Graduate College and Research Compliance Office offices are located in two suites on the first floor of Whitt Hall. Staff are happy with the new spaces and the more central location on campus.

Advancement and Fund-Raising Activities

Radford has been preparing to enter the public phase of its current capital campaign in the spring of 2020, but was postponed due to the pandemic. The College of Graduate Studies and Research, like the other colleges, has its own assigned fund-raising goal for the capital campaign. Toward that effort I have worked with the Advancement Office to support fund-raising efforts through the following efforts:

- Met with Advancement Office staff to coordinate CGSR fund-raising strategies and approaches for fund raising efforts
- Met with Advancement Office to coordinate promotional materials for the capital campaign.
- Wrote thank you notes to donors and contributors

Radford Libraries

In March 2021 I was asked to step in to serve as **Interim Dean of Libraries**. Although late in this review period, the Library is an essential service and the central hub of the academic life of the university. I have been meeting with Library staff at both the main and RU campuses to assist them as I am able. I hope to learn more about the library and its services and how that may assist faculty and student research efforts as related to my leadership of graduate studies and research. My service as interim dean will continue until a new leader of the libraries is selected.

Committee Service

Academic Affairs Leadership Team	Scholarly Activities Committee, Chair
President's Leadership Council	RUC Operations Advisory Group
Graduate Affairs Council, Chair, <i>ex officio</i>	Institutional Official for Research Compliance
Academic Policies and Procedures Committee	Academic Program Review Committee
Graduate Enrollment Management Alignment Group	RUC Operations Advisory Group
Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee	Academic Partnerships Implementation Team

Events and Regular Meetings Attended

Board of Visitors meetings
Chemistry Department meetings
IRB and IACUC meetings (virtually, as needed)
Hanover Research Grants consultation meetings
Grant Writing Workshop – (virtual, Sept. 2020)
Jump Start Career Conference – Graduate School Panelist
Sociology Career Day, panelist (virtual, Oct. 2020)
Council of Graduate School Annual Meeting (virtual Dec. 2020)

Virginia Council of Graduate Schools (virtual meetings, Oct. 2020, Mar. 2021)

Counseling Psychology Interview Day Welcome (provided welcome video)

3 Minute Thesis Competition Awards Ceremony (virtual co-host, Mar. 2021)